



For Release: Thursday, May 10, 2018

18-725-DAL

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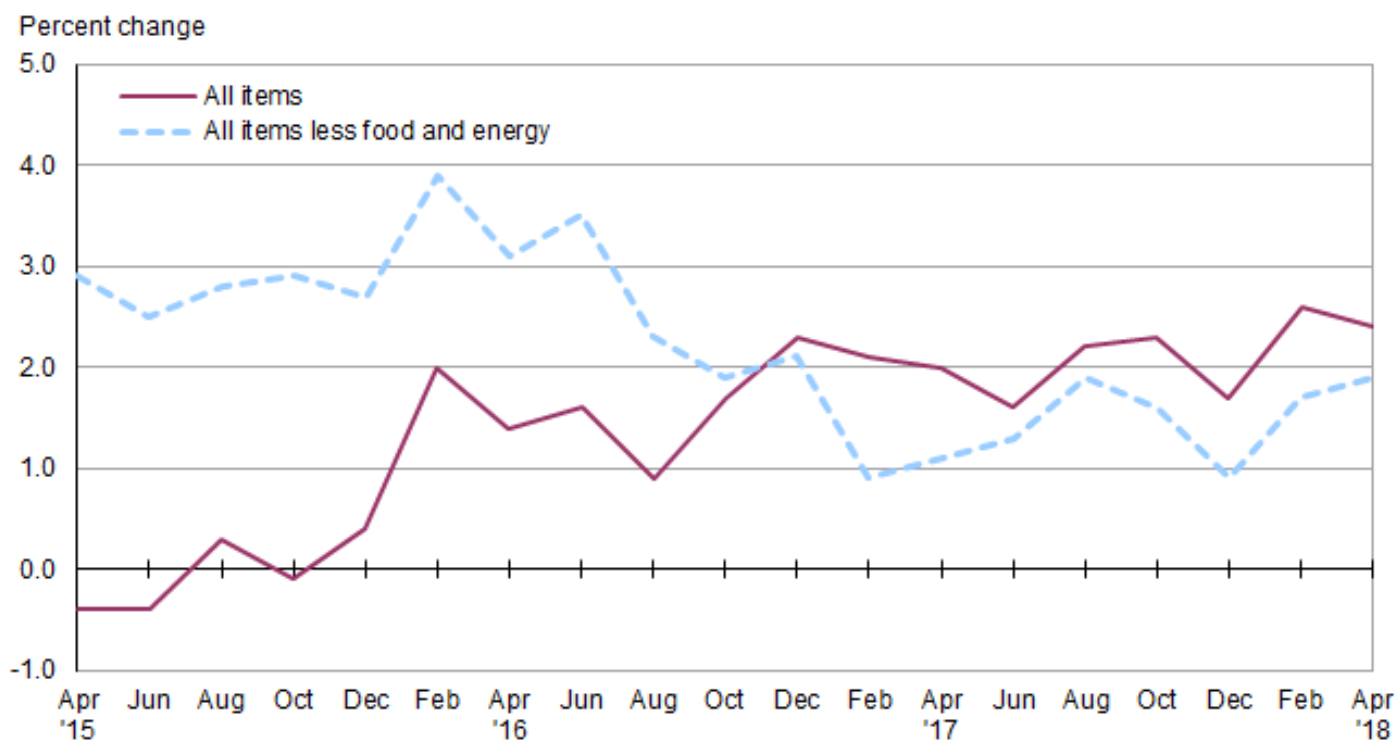
Consumer Price Index, Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land – April 2018

Area prices rise 0.2 percent in March and April and increase 2.4 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land rose 0.2 percent in March and April, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that a 0.5-percent advance in the all items less food and energy index was the largest contributor to the increase. However, much of the advance was tempered by a 2.4-percent decrease in energy costs, specifically electricity. Food prices were little changed during the period (0.1 percent). (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, short-term changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

During the year ended in April 2018, the all items CPI-U advanced 2.4 percent. The index for all items less food and energy rose at a 1.9-percent pace. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Houston, TX, April 2015–April 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Local food prices were little changed, edging up 0.1 percent in March and April, after falling 0.3 percent in January and February. Between the two components of the index, prices for food at home (grocery stores) rose 0.4 percent, while prices for food away from home slipped 0.2 percent.

From April 2017 to April 2018, the food index advanced 1.3 percent. The annual increase in food prices was entirely the result of higher prices for food away from home, which rose 2.8 percent. In contrast, prices for food at home were unchanged over the year.

Energy

The energy index fell 2.4 percent in March and April, after increasing 5.9 percent in January and February. The current decrease was the result of a 13.1-percent decline in electricity prices. Motor fuel costs were up 6.6 percent during the period and natural gas costs rose 1.5 percent.

During the year ended in April 2018, the energy index climbed 9.5 percent, with all sub-components contributing. Motor fuel costs were up 11.6 percent over the year, electricity prices rose 7.2 percent, and natural gas costs advanced 5.4 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.5 percent in March and April, after rising 1.2 percent in January and February. A 0.8-percent increase in shelter costs had the greatest impact, reflecting a 0.7-percent increase for residential rents, and a 1.0-percent increase in owners' equivalent rent. Higher apparel prices, up 2.7 percent, were another important factor in the increase. In contrast, medical care prices fell 0.5 percent during the period.

From April 2017 to April 2018, the index for all items less food and energy rose 1.9 percent. The biggest factor in the annual increase was a 2.1-percent rise in shelter costs, though higher prices for medical care (3.4 percent) also contributed. Prices for education and communication rose 0.9 percent during the previous 12 months, the first annual increase for this index since the year ended in June 2016.

The June 2018 Consumer Price Index for Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land is scheduled to be released Thursday, July 12, 2018.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 29 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately

22,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details, see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, *The Consumer Price Index*, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, Texas, Core Based Statistical Area** includes Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller Counties.

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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Feb. 2018	Mar. 2018	Apr. 2018	Apr. 2017	Feb. 2018	Mar. 2018
All items.....	224.711	-	225.116	2.4	0.2	-
All items (1967 = 100)	720.728	-	722.027			
Food and beverages	228.839	-	228.759	1.3	0.0	-
Food	228.760	-	228.930	1.3	0.1	-
Food at home	222.548	219.799	223.472	0.0	0.4	1.7
Cereals and bakery products	263.618	-	265.589	-	0.7	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....	240.695	-	247.072	-	2.6	-
Dairy and related products	183.930	-	179.201	-	-2.6	-
Fruits and vegetables	282.621	-	279.262	-	-1.2	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	270.072	-	277.855	-	2.9	-
Other food at home	193.942	-	191.412	-	-1.3	-
Food away from home.....	231.299	-	230.734	2.8	-0.2	-
Alcoholic beverages	219.906	-	215.923	0.2	-1.8	-
Housing	218.023	-	217.326	2.3	-0.3	-
Shelter	256.965	257.999	258.971	2.1	0.8	0.4
Rent of primary residence(2).....	255.000	255.779	256.814	2.1	0.7	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2) (3)	237.003	238.766	239.472	2.6	1.0	0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)(3).....	237.003	238.766	239.472	2.6	1.0	0.3
Fuels and utilities.....	187.982	-	174.462	7.5	-7.2	-
Household energy	171.122	150.339	151.793	6.6	-11.3	1.0
Energy services(2)	168.396	147.738	149.195	6.6	-11.4	1.0
Electricity(2).....	170.466	146.865	148.199	7.2	-13.1	0.9
Utility (piped) gas service(2).....	141.369	141.371	143.497	5.4	1.5	1.5
Household furnishings and operations	129.692	-	130.362	-0.8	0.5	-
Apparel.....	190.898	-	196.048	5.1	2.7	-
Transportation	185.493	-	187.610	2.9	1.1	-
Private transportation	185.398	-	187.010	3.6	0.9	-
New and used motor vehicles(4).....	88.596	-	87.965	-	-0.7	-
New vehicles(1).....	164.004	-	161.496	-	-1.5	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	225.068	-	228.248	-	1.4	-
Motor fuel	211.417	208.277	225.283	11.6	6.6	8.2
Gasoline (all types).....	211.290	208.147	225.577	11.5	6.8	8.4
Gasoline, unleaded regular(5).....	213.519	210.070	228.491	11.3	7.0	8.8
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(5)(6).....	226.862	225.046	238.807	10.2	5.3	6.1
Gasoline, unleaded premium(5).....	233.151	231.911	244.690	12.1	4.9	5.5
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....	745.087	-	734.547	-	-1.4	-
Medical care	492.756	-	490.156	3.4	-0.5	-
Recreation(4).....	103.711	-	103.633	0.8	-0.1	-
Education and communication(4).....	120.711	-	121.258	0.9	0.5	-
Tuition, other school fees, and childcare(1) ...	1,207.972	-	1,220.822	-	1.1	-
Other goods and services	410.710	-	411.378	2.1	0.2	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	174.742	-	176.434	1.6	1.0	-
Commodities less food and beverages	148.088	-	150.348	1.5	1.5	-
Nondurables less food and beverages.....	202.264	-	208.255	5.3	3.0	-
Durables	99.614	-	99.560	-2.7	-0.1	-
Services.....	275.844	-	274.929	2.8	-0.3	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less shelter.....	212.606	-	212.410	2.5	-0.1	-
All items less medical care	211.810	-	212.312	2.3	0.2	-

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Feb. 2018	Mar. 2018	Apr. 2018	Apr. 2017	Feb. 2018	Mar. 2018
Commodities less food	150.568	-	152.709	1.5	1.4	-
Nondurables	215.894	-	218.957	3.3	1.4	-
Nondurables less food.....	203.064	-	208.519	5.1	2.7	-
Services less rent of shelter(3).....	294.682	-	290.307	3.2	-1.5	-
Services less medical care services.....	254.418	-	253.619	2.7	-0.3	-
Energy	189.253	176.313	184.700	9.5	-2.4	4.8
All items less energy	231.096	-	232.096	1.8	0.4	-
All items less food and energy	231.323	-	232.466	1.9	0.5	-

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on an April 1978=100 base.

(2) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(3) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

(4) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(5) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(6) Index on a December 1993=100.

- Data not available. Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.